



Northern Iraq



Soldiers from C Battery, First Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment play volleyball at the Rizgardi Youth Center with citizens of the Kurdish city Khanaqin. The volleyball game took place after a ceremony celebrating the re-opening of the center.

Youth center gets facelift

Story and photo by Capt. Jefferson Wolfe

367th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KHANAQIN — During the re-opening of a renovated youth center, where his unit lived for four months, Capt. Robert Walker illustrated one case of Coalition forces achieving their goals in Iraq.

Walker, the commander of C Battery, First Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, part of Task Force Ironhorse, thanked the crowd of residents and city officials for letting his battery establish residence in the Rizgardi Youth Center. It had been badly damaged during the war. While living there, soldiers worked

with contractors to renovate the facility.

The soldiers never intended to stay in the center permanently, but always planned to repair and return the center to the city of Khanaqin and its children, Walker said.

“Now, it has happened,” he said, just before the ribbon was cut. Then, soldiers, city officials, local residents and children entered the building that had been freshly painted white and teal. Once inside, the people were greeted with new athletic supplies the soldiers had bought and donated to the center, including: jerseys, soccer balls, basketballs, volleyballs, athletic shoes and other

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Water plant running at full speed

By Spc. Samuel Soza

367th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAYJI — With help from Task Force Ironhorse engineers, residents of Bayji are finally receiving cleaner water following a two-month rehabilitation of the city’s only water treatment plant.

Now, water is flowing as far as 10 miles to smaller towns — something the plant could not handle before.

Initial assessments made by 4th Infantry Division engineers in May revealed that the station was running at only 33 percent of its operating capability. Water was being pumped directly out of the Tigris River without any filtering.

“(The plant) bypassed the disinfecting stages,”

said Capt. Michael P. Monaco, engineer targeting and intelligence officer for 4th ID. “Now it gets chlorinated and sediment gets filtered.”

The renovation project, conducted in five phases by local contractors, including upgrading pumps, disinfectant systems and filtering equipment. The cost of the project was \$471,000, which came from the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Now operating at full capacity, the plant is providing approximately 15 million gallons of treated water to Bayji and its 120,000 residents.

The contract for the plant was awarded to the Al Thuraya Industrial Holding Co. from Baghdad, on July 27. Using local workers, Al Thuraya worked about 60 days restoring the treatment station fol-

lowing 18 years of neglect under Saddam Hussein’s former regime.

“It was built in 1984 but was never maintained,” said Monaco, a native of Bridgeport, Conn. “(It’s) like fixing cars. There’s a lot of moving parts that need tightening, fixing.”

Aside from renovating the station, Al Thuraya retrained many employees on how to maintain the facility, as many of the workers had never seen the plant working at its full capacity.

Division engineers are also involved in two similar projects now underway in the cities of Az Zawyyiah and As Sharqat.

They are also trying to obtain funding for a treatment plant in the city of Tuz.

Contributions to the newspaper are welcome from service members in northern Iraq. Submit stories to cpiccmdinfo@baghdadforum.com.

Station improved, all set for showtime

Funds help restore television channel

By Maj. Roger Lawson
506th Air Expeditionary Group

KIRKUK — The voice of a free Iraq rings clearer today thanks to the combined efforts of Kirkuk members and the Commander's Emergency Response Program.

Members of the 173rd Airborne Brigade and 506th Air Expeditionary Group have spent the last six months restoring the Iraqi Media Network's government-owned television station into a fully functional media outlet.

"Compared to when we first jumped into the country, the difference is night and day," said Army Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver, public affairs noncommissioned officer for the 173rd. "When we got here they really didn't have any equipment or experience operating in an environment of free press."

Much of that has changed, as the network's Kirkuk affiliate has gone from a looted post-war shell to a station that boasts new equipment. But, the transition hasn't been easy. Until recently, they

only had one camera and couldn't capture any of the things happening throughout the city.

"They relied on AFN (American Forces Network) and the Air Force's Combat Camera team to film events and hand deliver them to the station for airing," Oliver said. "Fortunately, we were able to help them purchase several new cameras, along with computers, televisions, and editing equipment. We later bought them new television studio furniture through CERP."

"They've kept us very busy," said Capt. Kristen Templet, 506th AEG combat camera team chief. "It isn't our traditional role as combat camera, but it has been very rewarding to watch the station up on its own two feet."

According to Maria Hawil, IMN's general manager in Kirkuk, the station now broadcasts about 14 hours a day. She credits their success to the hard work of her staff and the help they've received from coalition forces.

Today, programming still includes rebroadcasts from Baghdad, but viewers can now choose to watch a variety of other programs as well.

"It's been a long road, but this station now plays a major role in telling the people of Kirkuk what's happening throughout the region," Oliver said. "I'm glad we could be part of it."

Kirkuk Airbase Chapel Schedule

Friday

5 a.m., 7 p.m. — Islamic prayer

9 a.m. — Catholic Mass (Sky Soldier chapel)

Saturday

7 p.m. — Catholic Mass

Sunday

8 a.m. — Gospel Service

9 a.m. — Catholic Mass

(Sky Soldier chapel)

10 a.m. — General Protestant

11:30 a.m. — Catholic Mass

1 p.m. — Latter-Day Saints

2 p.m. — Catholic Mass (Sky Soldiers Chapel)

7 p.m. — Protestant Service

Tuesday

6:30 p.m. — Growing as a Christian: Studying the Book of James

Wednesday

8 a.m. — The Bible in Light of Current History and Local Events

5:30 p.m. — Building Your Faith: Studying the Book of Hebrews

*All services are held at the Ten Days From Tomorrow Chapel unless otherwise noted. Times subject to change. Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and others should contact chapel administration for updates of their religious requirements and support.

Health screening made painless

By Spc. Melissa Walther
367th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

TIKRIT — The last thing soldiers returning home after a long deployment want to deal with is more paperwork or lost records.

The Army is working to guard against this with its new Post Deployment Health Assessment Forms.

"We're switching to digital forms for better accountability," said 1st Lt. Stephen Todd, an instructor for the Post Deployment Health Assessment Forms with Combined Joint Task Force Seven.

Previously a four page form, the records are now stored on a laptop or handheld computer and can be quickly accessed or transferred to another computer.

"These forms let us assess what has changed in a soldier's health during a deployment," said Capt.

David Bowen, a medical information officer with the 4th Infantry Division. "We've had such a hard time finding causes of things like Gulf War Syndrome because there were no good pre- and post- deployment records."

According to Todd, most of the time soldiers are actually healthier after a deployment due to the amount of time they exercise, but this is not always the case.

"If a soldier has medical problems due to a deployment, we need to know about it so we can treat it," Todd said.

Not only will the new system allow for better medical records, it will reduce the time involved during redeployment.

Copies of the new records will be e-mailed to healthcare providers at demobilization stations in the United States, according to Todd.

"It streamlines and speeds up the redeployment process," Todd said. "It also cuts down on records

being lost in the mail."

As an additional safeguard, the files for everyone in a unit will be copied to a disk and given to the commander.

A copy of an individual soldier's medical records can be transferred to a smart card that can then be worn on the identification tags.

"Eventually the records will be directly on the chip in your military ID," Bowen said.

According to Todd, this is the first full-scale field test of the program, which has been in the development phase for several years.

"We just haven't had a lot of soldiers redeploying before now," he said.

"We've found some bugs while we were in Kuwait, but those are fixed now."

The new digital versions of the medical forms are becoming an Army standard.

"We're moving towards a paperless Army," Todd said.

Shhh! Remember the enemy is listening. He wants to know what you know. Keep it to yourself.

Iraqi traffic officers police streets

Story and photo by Spc. Bronwyn M. Meyer
367th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

TIKRIT — Though their police station was destroyed during the war, Tikrit traffic officials haven't been slowed. In fact, they are speeding ahead with keeping legal drivers on the road.

Two rooms bursting with folders in the new traffic registry office are a testament to the dedicated officers who saved vehicle registrations and other important documents during the war.

As a result, the officers are helping the citizens of Tikrit by issuing temporary vehicle registrations, license plates, and driver licenses, as well as reorganizing the traffic station.

"After the war started, our office was bombed," said Col. Kalaf Sabar, who is in charge of the registry. "We heard the sound of bombs. There were many aircraft in the sky."

Despite the chaos, traffic officers valued the vehicle documents so much that they returned to the bombed building and retrieved some 25,000 folders from the rubble.

Without vehicle registration, automobiles can be detained at the discretion of authorities. Obviously when this occurs, residents can lose their key to the city — making it harder to get to work, to the market, or to school.

"I was impressed that these people had the foresight to protect the records and took the trouble to actually do it," said Maj. Kathleen Perry, 418th Civil Affairs Battalion civil defense team chief.

In need of a new building, the traffic officers moved their station down the street and with help from Coalition forces they began to rebuild.

The office received some money from the Coalition to refurbish the new office, but they still need more to buy necessary equipment, "but at

least we got them started," Perry said.

The police officers have endured the instability of starting over, sorting through thousands of records, and using out-of-date computers. Even with these challenges, the registry began serving the Iraqi people at the beginning of August.

"In spite of difficulties we are working our best to help the people," said Chief Hussain Salih Mohammad, chief of traffic police in the Salah Al Din province, where Tikrit is located.

The office received no guidance from Baghdad, but they saw the need of the people in Tikrit, Perry said.

By the time state officials told the cities in Iraq to begin issuing temporary vehicle registrations, the office in Tikrit was already up and serving city residents.

"Instead of sitting there saying 'I can't do anything because Baghdad didn't tell me what to do,' Col. Kalaf is doing it without instructions from Baghdad, or from Americans for that matter," Perry said.

Vehicle theft and the loss of vehicle registrations has been a major problem in many Iraqi cities since the downfall of the former regime.

"A lot of vehicles have been stolen and a lot of records lost," Perry said.

The stolen vehicles have caused mass confusion with vehicle registration. Coalition forces and Iraqi police are trying to rectify the situation. Registrations and license plates are being forged, but traffic officers in Tikrit have come up with a novel solution.

Taking a page from the books of its neighbors in the Middle East, Mohammed has designed a license plate that is hard to forge. The new design incorporates holograms so fake license plates can be easily identified.



A local man gives vehicle documents to Tikrit traffic officers at a registration office in the city. The office, which opened in August, issues temporary licenses, license plates and vehicle registrations.

The idea has been proposed to Baghdad, and if approved, the license plate will be manufactured and placed on all Iraqi vehicles.

The long line at the Department of Motor Vehicles in the U.S. is nothing new, but in Tikrit the long line that wraps around the freshly painted registry building and the hard working traffic officers serving the people signify a return to normality in Tikrit.

Where's the mail?

CPA Mail Room

Mail pick-up daily:

7 to 10:45 a.m.

4:30 to 6 p.m.

Letters under 13 ounces may be mailed in the Human Resource Management office.

Letters to the United States may go free. All others require postage. Outgoing mail is picked up daily at 10:45 a.m.

CPA/CJTF-7

Military Pay Office Hours of operation

Military pay inquiries

Saturday — Thursday

9 to 11:30 a.m.

12:30 to 5 p.m.

Cashier

Saturday, Monday and Wednesday

9 to 11:30 a.m.

12:30 to 5 p.m.

Located in the basement at the rear of the CPA palace. Also located at the Joint Contracting Finance and Resource Management Office near the 28th Combat Support Hospital.

CENTER

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items. The donated equipment filled several tables and spilled over onto the floor.

Because of looters, there was no sporting equipment in the building when C Battery arrived in Khanaqin, said 1st Sgt. Jose Pepin, originally from Naranjito, Puerto Rico. In fact, the center was left completely empty.

From the beginning of June until early October, the soldiers assisted contractors who made improvements such as repairing plaster, painting, and installing new windows and air conditioning. They also built showers and rest rooms.

About 90 soldiers lived and worked in the center for those four months, said Walker, a resident of Picayune, Miss.

After touring the facility to see the renovations and inspecting the new supplies, the visitors went outside to the center's refurbished volleyball court, where they chose up sides.

The teams included both Americans, in desert tan uniforms and boots, and Iraqis in brightly colored jerseys, and shorts.

The games marked the true purpose of the youth center's name, Rizgardi, which is Kurdish for freedom.

Ali Kumal Adhm has been the youth center's volleyball coach. Before the war, his teams of 18- and 19-year-old boys were four-time

champions of the Diyala province. He thanked the American soldiers for renovating the building.

"We are happy for American soldiers coming to Iraq," he said through an interpreter.

Another employee of the center, Ahamed Mmohammed Adhm taught computer classes to local youths before the war.

In addition to computers, there were other types of classes, such as drawing for younger children, Adhm said. He noted the vast improvements the soldiers made will make the center viable once again.

"The building is better," he said. "But most important is (the Americans) saved Iraqis from Saddam."

C Battery's troops have also helped Khanaqin — a city of about 40,000 people located near the Iranian border in the Kurdish region of eastern Iraq — by training its people as security forces, including police officers and border guards, he said.

For the soldiers of C Battery, training police and rebuilding public resources are far removed from their normal mission, Walker said.

"On top of what we already do, we have been doing this," he said.

In addition, the soldiers moved into a new camp outside of Khanaqin, and are continuing to make improvements there.

"We've got our hands full," Pepin said.

Decorating dedication

Photo by Spc. Joshua Hutcheson

Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) pins a Combat Infantryman Badge on a soldier from 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) during an award ceremony at Qayyarah West to celebrate his achievements over the last eight months.

Sick Call hours CPA Medical Clinic

8 — 11 a.m.

1 — 4 p.m.

Emergencies only after 4 p.m.

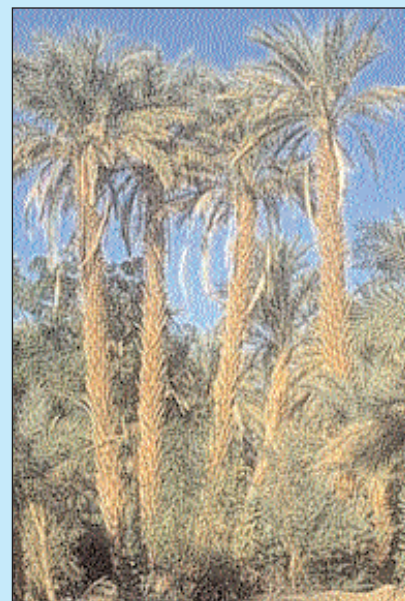
Weekly Words of Wisdom

“*If there is no struggle, there is no progress.*”

— Frederick Douglass

Did you know?**Interesting facts about the date palm tree**

Nakhla- tree
Tamr- date fruit



- 1.) Tall, evergreen, unbranched palm, can grow to 30 meters
- 2.) Iraq is the top commercial producer and exporter of dates
- 3.) Each tree produces between five and ten bunches. A mature female tree can produce upwards of 150 pounds of fruit annually.
- 4.) Bedouin Arabs, who eat them on a regular basis, show an extremely low incidence of cancer and heart disease.
- 5.) Every part of the tree has its uses.
- 6.) Dates are high in fiber and an excellent source of potassium.

For more information visit

agronomy.ucdavis.edu/gepts/PB143/CROP/DATE/date.htm